

What does being a Canadian citizen mean to you?

To me, being a Canadian citizen is a responsibility and a privilege. As the child of a refugee, I have heard first hand the struggles others face, and the opportunities and freedoms we benefit from. In the small things I see each and every day, I'm reminded of why I'm thankful to have been born and raised in Canada.

Being "Canadian" is more than just a title. It's an identity and a perspective. Canadians are internationally minded and accepting. We welcome different cultures and celebrate our diversity. We are committed to our beliefs and hold firm in our values. We walk on the shoulders of those that have fought and died for our rights, and shared our values of freedom and democracy.

As a Canadian, I cherish the fact that I can speak freely about my government. I can take part in our elections, and hold those in power accountable. I can trust in our institutions of government, and can seek answers when I don't. I know that no matter who you are, you have a say and a voice in your government. The fact that my voice matters and counts for something, is a privilege many live without, and many take for granted.

With all the privileges we are given as Canadians, comes an equal responsibility. I hold myself responsible to those less fortunate, those who come before me, and those who will come after. This means using my privilege to help those around me. This means honouring and respecting the traditions and cultures of our heritage. This means protecting our planet and our country, so that future generations can appreciate the same opportunities I do.

To be Canadian means to be thankful for all I have and to hold myself responsible for all I can do.